

Testimony to the Appropriations Committee

Regarding the Governor's Proposed Budget for Department of Children and Families

March 1st, 2023

Re: The Connection Inc. Supportive Housing for Families Program

Submitted by DeShawn Jennings

Hello members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is DeShawn Jennings and I would like to thank you for this opportunity to share with you my experience working with Supportive Housing for Families. I also want to say thank you for funding this very important program which has given me and my children a home and helped me to keep my family together.

I entered the Supportive Housing for Families (SHF) Program on September 19, 2022. My entry to the program was a bit unconventional. In May 2022, I was unexpectedly given 24 hours to leave my home with my eight children. I have three daughters and five sons who range in age from two years old to fifteen years old. I am a single parent and at that time my finances were limited, and I was trying to maintain my own moving business. I was able to obtain support from a family member for a short stay at a hotel. I contacted 211 to search for housing options. My family and I were placed in temporary housing through 211 and stayed in various hotels. In the meantime, I was looking everywhere for houses to accommodate my family size. I was afraid I would lose my children. I researched housing programs across Connecticut and came upon The Connection – Supportive Housing for Families through DCF. I contacted Kim Somaroo-Rodriguez at DCF, and she connected me with Supportive Housing for Families.

Shortly after my first meeting with my Case Manager, we started viewing apartments and houses. I was able to find a single-family house that would accommodate my family size. During this time, Supportive Housing for Families was able to obtain a Section 8 voucher for me and my family was able to move into a single-family home on January 1, 2023.

The support from the program in helping me with a Section 8 voucher, a security deposit, furniture, a laptop computer, payment to obtain our belongings from a self-storage unit as well as needed household items has been invaluable to me and my children. This help allowed us to be a family and to start over again. I have been able to focus on obtaining employment, taking real estate courses and working to settle my children at home and in their new school.

I appreciate all of your support in helping to fund this very important program which has provided me with a beautiful home for me and my children. Again, thank you for your continued funding of this program.

